11

STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE

(2010-2011)

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

[Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Construction of Roads in the Border Areas of the Country]

ELEVENTH REPORT

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

March, 2011 / Phalguna 1932 (Saka)

ELEVENTH REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE

(2010-2011)

(FIFTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

[Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Construction of Roads in the Border Areas of the Country]

Presented to Lok Sabha on 24 March, 2011

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 24 March, 2011

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

March, 2011 / Phalguna 1932 (Saka)

CONTENTS

		PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE (2010-2011)…….		(ii)
INTRODUCTION..……		(iii)
CHAPTER I	Report ……..….	1
CHAPTER II	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by the Government…….……..…...	17
CHAPTER III	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies……..…..……..……	33
CHAPTER IV	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the committee……..……..……	34
CHAPTER V	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited. ……	42

APPENDIX

	Minutes of the Sixth Sitting of the Committee on Defence held on 16 July, 2011	
	Analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence (Fifteenth Lok Sabha)……..…	43

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE (2010-11)

Shri Satpal Maharaj - Chairman

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Harish Chaudhary
3. Shri Kamal Kishor 'Commando'
4. Shri H.D. Devegowda
5. Shri Varun Gandhi
6. Dr. Sucharu Ranjan Haldar
7. Shri Kapil Muni Karwariya
8. Shri Bhaskar Rao Patil Khatgaonkar
9. Shri Asaduddin Owaisi
10. Prof. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
11. Shri A.T. Nana Patil
12. Shri C.R. Patil
13. Shri Amarnath Pradhan
14. Shri C. Rajendran
15. Shri J. Ramesh
16. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
17. Shri Baju Ban Riyan
18. Shri Kalyan Singh
19. Shri Mahabali Singh
20. Rajkumari Ratna Singh

RAJYA SABHA

21. Shri Munquad Ali
22. Shri Avinash Rai Khanna
23. Prof. P.J. Kurien
24. Shri Mukut Mithi
25. Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi
26. Shri T.K. Rangarajan
27. Shri Birender Singh
28. Shri Ram Kripal Yadav
29. Shri M.V. Mysura Reddy
30. Shri Naresh Gujral

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri T.K. Mukherjee - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Sudesh Luthra - Director
3. Smt. Jyochnamayi Sinha - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri Rahul Singh - Committee Officer

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Defence (2010-2011), having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present this Eleventh Report on 'action taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Construction of Roads in border areas of the country'.

2. The Eighth Report was presented to the Lok Sabha on 19 August, 2010 and laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on the same day. The Ministry furnished their Action Taken Notes on all the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Eighth Report on 21 January, 2011.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 16 March, 2011.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, Recommendations/ Observations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the Report.

5. An analysis of Action Taken by the Government on the Recommendations/Observations contained in the Eleventh Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given at Annexure-II.

NEW DELHI;
16 March, 2011
25 Phalgun, 1932 (Saka)

SATPAL MAHARAJ,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Defence

CHAPTER–I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Defence deals with action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Construction of Roads in the Border Areas of the Country', which was presented to Lok Sabha and laid in Rajya Sabha on 19.08.2010.

2. The Committee's Eighth Report (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) contained 18 recommendations/observations on the following aspects: -

Para No.	Subject
1.	Overall scenario of construction of roads and border areas
2.	Construction of roads on borders by the neighbouring countries
3.	Long Term Perspective Plans of construction of border roads
4.	Capacity building of BRO
5.	Expertise in tunnel construction by BRO
6.	Maintenance of Border Roads
7.	The budget as well as staff constraints
8.	Induction of Information Technology in Border Areas
9.	Outsourcing of activities of BRO
10.	Strengthening of infrastructure available with BRO
11.	Providing proper uniform and other livery items to BRO officers and workers
12.	Inadequate Airlift
13.	Availability of land for construction of border roads
14.	Streamlining the procedure with regard to forest and wildlife clearances
15.	Single umbrella for wildlife and forest clearance
16.	Coordination of various authorities to handle infrastructure for Border Roads
17.	Rehabilitation & Resettlement
18.	Concluding recommendations/observations

3. Action Taken Replies have been received from the Government in respect of all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report. These replies have been examined and the same have been categorized as follows: -

(i) Recommendations/observations, which have been accepted by the Government (Please see Chapter II): -

Para Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 16, 18

(10 Recommendations)

(ii) Recommendations/observations, which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the replies of the Government (Please see Chapter III): -

Para Nos. Nil

(Nil Recommendation)

(iii) Recommendations/observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and which require reiteration (Please see Chapter IV): -

Para Nos. 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 17.

(08 Recommendations)

(iv) Recommendations/observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited (Please see Chapter V): -

Para Nos. Nil

(Nil Recommendation)

4. The Committee desire the Ministry's response to their comments made in Chapter-I of this Report be furnished to them at the earliest and in any case not later than six months of the presentation of this Report.

A. Overall scenario of construction of roads in border areas

Recommendation (Paragraph No.1)

5. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee note that India has 14,880 Kms. long land borders running through 92 districts in 17 States and share with seven neighbouring Countries viz Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal. Whereas the Western borders of the country along the State of J&K (plains), Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat are reasonably well connected and fairly accessible, the Northern and Eastern Borders are not as well connected as informed by the Ministry of Defence. In view of the aforesaid status of border roads, the Army posts along the Northern and Eastern borders are also not so well connected. Although a lot of efforts are being made by the Union Government and State governments to provide connectivity to our borders, the unique strategic location of India poses unique security challenges. More so, the problems specific to different portions of our extensive borders have become aggravated in recent times due to cross border terrorism as acknowledged by the Group of Ministers in its report. Besides the infrastructure being created on the border by our neighbouring countries particularly China further poses challenges before the country.

The Government has created the Border Roads Organization (BRO) in the year 1960 with the aim of speedy development of road network and infrastructure along the borders and the roads constructed by the Ministry of defence are mainly handled by BRO. The Committee during the recent study visit to Leh, Srinagar and border areas have observed that construction and maintenance of border roads/tunnels/infrastructure are affected due to various factors which include lack of adequate funds, capability constraints, inadequate airlifting facility, pending forest/wildlife clearance, overall increase in the quantum of work being entrusted to Border Road Organization (BRO). The Committee may like to emphasize that roads are an essential part of the border management. Besides the good connectivity to our border by roads is pre-requisite for the socio-economic development of the nation. Not only the, roads in the border areas are necessary for the Armed Forces to meet their strategic needs. In wartime, it is essential to develop and maintain roads to keep the line of communication open in original and redeployed sectors for the Armed Forces. Various aspects related to construction of border roads have been examined in detail by the Committee and recommendations/observations covering various issues have been given in the succeeding part of the report. Here, the committee may like to strongly recommend the Government to take all the desired initiatives to address to the various problems coming in the way of construction of border roads. Not only that, there is an urgent need to have fast track procedures for the construction of roads and other infrastructure on our borders, keeping in view the strategic needs as well as the challenges the country faces."

6. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Observations of the Committee have been noted."

7. The Committee had recommended that Government should take all the desired initiatives to address the various problems coming in the way of construction of roads. However, the Ministry has simply stated that the observations of the Committee have been noted, instead of indicating any concrete action taken in response to the recommendation of the Committee. Therefore, the Committee desire that specific action taken in this regard should be intimated to them at the earliest.

B. Expertise in tunnel construction by BRO

Recommendation (Paragraph No.5)

8. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee find that tunnel construction is part of the road works. BRO is the premier organization involved with the creation of infrastructure on our borders, even then it has no expertise in tunnel construction. The Committee during the course of examination have been informed that reputed consultants are being inducted to execute the work for execution of Rohtang tunnel. The Committee are unhappy to note the aforesaid position. It is surprising to note that even after celebrating the Golden Jubilee of BRO in the year, 2010, adequate emphasis has not been given on tunnel training. To address the problem, only 6-7 officers are now being trained in the task of tunnel construction. The Committee strongly recommend that all out efforts should be made to train more and more officers in the construction of tunnels. While involving the international reputed consultants for tunnel works, it should be ensured that our own officers are also associated with the task so that they may also get proper on-the-job training. The Committee would also like to emphasize that it should be ensured that all the tunnel works including Rohtang Pass are completed within the stipulated time frame."

9. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

> "Government is seriously concerned about training of BRO engineers for tunnel works. Further a Steering Committee (of MOD) is closely and regularly monitoring the progress of Rohtang Tunnel and all efforts are being made to complete it in stipulated time."

10. The Committee while observing that only 6-7 officers were being given training in the task of tunnel construction, had recommended that all out efforts should be made to train more and more officers in the construction of tunnels. The Ministry has stated that the Government is seriously concerned about the training without indicating any steps taken or any modalities framed in the field of construction of tunnels particularly when the infrastructure created by our neighbouring countries particularly China posses challenges before the country. Expressing serious concern over the inadequate attention being paid to one of the important activities of infrastructure creation in border areas i.e. construction of tunnels, the Committee strongly recommend to initiate concrete steps in regard to imparting training to BRO engineers in this field.

C. <u>The budget as well as staff constraints</u>

<u>Recommendation (Paragraph No. 7)</u>

11. The Committee had recommended as under:

> "The Committee observe from the information furnished by the Ministry that funds are not a constraint so far as the issue of construction of border roads is concerned. The outlay during Eleventh plan is steadily increasing and the expenditure position is also satisfactory except for the year 2009-10 when Rs.779 Crore had to be surrendered due to late approval of budget, the year being the election year. While taking note of the fact the finances are not a constraint so far as the matter of construction of border roads is concerned, the Committee find that a lot needs to be

done to increase the capacity of BRO that is the main organization involved in the construction of roads. From the data made available by Ministry of Defence, the Committee find that the restructuring of BRO was sanctioned in September, 2006. Out of 151 sanctioned units, BRO has raised only 127 units as part of capability building measures. The Committee further observe that there is a huge gap between the sanctioned and the existing strength of officers and subordinates in BRO. Out of the authorized strength of 1999 officers, the present strength is only 1204, the deficiency being 36.9 percent. Similarly in case of subordinates the existing strength is 35579 against the authorized strength of 40747, the deficiency being 12.7 percent. With the raising of the remaining 24 units, the situation in this regard may further worsen. The Committee express serious concern over such a state of affairs and strongly recommend that all initiatives should be taken to raise the remaining 24 sanctioned units and to recruit the officers and staff without any further delay so as to enable BRO to meet the overall increase in the quantum of work."

12. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Regarding steps taken so far, to fill up deficiencies of Officers and Subordinates:-

(a) **Officers**: Process for recruitment of 83 posts of AEE(Civ), 22 posts of AEE (E&M) and 31 posts of AO on interview basis has been completed by UPSC. Verification of documents, medical test etc are being done and offer of appointment will be issued shortly on completion of these requirements.

(b) **Subordinates**: 8610 candidates have since been inducted against various Advertisements since Sep 2007. Recruitment process in respect of 2565 vacancies published vide Advertisement No 01/2010 in Employment News dated 5-11 Jun 2010 is in process. The details of manpower up to Dec 10 are tabulated as follows:-

Group	Auth			Held			Deficiency		
	GP*	AP@	Total	GP	AP	Total	GP	AP	Total
A *	980	556	1536	516	329	845	464	227	691
B G	363	0	363	340	0	340	23	0	23
C R	37748	2999	40747	32754	2734	35488	4994	265	5259
Total E	**39091**	**3555**	**42646**	**33610**	**3063**	**36673**	**5481**	**492**	**5973**

F Personnel

@Army Personnel

Regarding raising of balance 24 units, it is submitted that presently steps are being taken to augment the existing units for better efficiency and once existing units get augmented additional units will be raised."

13. Capacity building is one of the imperative measures for timely construction of border roads. Therefore, the Committee had recommended to increase the strength of officers as well as subordinates as per the authorised strength. The Committee had also recommended to raise 24 more units as part of capacity building measures. In this regard the Committee note that all out efforts are being taken by the Ministry to meet the shortage of manpower. However, as stated by the Ministry the remaining 24 units will be created only after fulfilling the requirements of the existing units. As construction of border roads are very much required from the strategic point of view, and the task to be completed by BRO during the 11th & 12th Plan, the Committee wish to reiterate their earlier recommendation to take appropriate steps on war footing to raise the 24 units at the earliest.

D. <u>Induction of Information Technology in Border Areas</u>

Recommendation (Paragraph No.8)

14. The Committee had recommended as under:

> "As per the information furnished by the ministry of Defence, BRO Wide Area Network (BRO-WAN) is planning for connecting all BRO units for the purpose of sharing of data, voice and video. The Committee finds that it is utmost necessary to provide communication links in border areas. Not only that, proper communication is urgently required in war like situation. As such the Committee would like to emphasize that all efforts should be made so that the aforesaid project is executed expeditiously.

15. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

> "BRO-WAN was sanctioned by Govt of India, Sectt BRDB vide letter No.02/426/BEA/2006 dated 18 Aug 2006 for a total amount of Rs.15 Crore. The scope of work includes setting up of MPLS (Multi Protocol Label Switching) based WAN consisting of core, distribution and access network which includes application software like office automation, e-mail etc. at various BRO locations including Delhi and Pune.
>
> An Expression of Interest (EOI) was published for BRO-WAN in National Newspapers, Indian Trade Journal and BRO Website on 17 Sep 2009. Necessary steps are being taken for awarding the contract."

16. With a view to provide communication links in border areas in general and war like situation in particular, the Committee had recommended to make all out efforts to execute the BRO-WAN project expeditiously.

From the action taken reply it is observed that the Government has sanctioned the project in the year 2006. But the Government has taken three years to publish an Expression of Interest in the National Newspaper on 17 September, 2009. The Ministry is taking necessary steps for awarding the contract.

The Committee do not appreciate the inordinate delay for such an important assignment. Since communications network is a vital one in border area, the Committee wish to reiterate their earlier recommendation to complete the task within a time bound manner.

E. Strengthening of infrastructure available with BRO

Recommendation (Paragraph No.10)

17. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The data furnished by Ministry of Defence with regard to the authorized and existing infrastructure available with BRO indicates that there are gaps between quantity authorized and quantity held. Whereas, the Ministry of Defence has claimed that latest snow cutting equipments are available with BRO, the data indicates that out of 154 number of authorized snow cutting equipments, the quantity held is 77 i.e. around 50 per cent. Similarly, for welding sets, there is shortage of 16 items and under dragline; there is shortage of 4 numbers. Border roads are constructed on difficult terrains and under the harsh climatic conditions and adequate number of snow equipments and other machines/infrastructure are urgently required to enable BRO to accomplish the give tasks. The gap between the quantities held in respect of the important items is a matter of serious concern. The Committee strongly recommend that the equipments should be purchased as per the authorized quantity without any further delay. Besides urgent action should be taken to procure the latest equipments available worldwide to address to the challenges of constructing roads and infrastructure on difficult terrains."

18. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"The Government has approved 17 numbers of Snow Cutters in Annual Procurement Plan (APP) 2010-11, out of which 05 Nos are being procured, and for balance 24 Nos size-II Dozers in lieu of Snow Cutters are being procured as presently BRO is improving many roads to NHDL specification where a large fleet of Dozers are required and proposed procurement will serve dual purpose. Once the NHDL work will get completed the requirement of Snow Cutter will be reassessed and procured accordingly.

Regarding welding sets the Government has approved 20 Nos Welding Sets in APP 2010-11 and procurement action is under progress.

In addition, Government has sanctioned Rs 100 Crore for creating a bank of cutting edge equipment over and above the authorization to meet the unforeseen requirements and fair wear and tear."

19. The Committee in their earlier report had noted deficiency of 77 nos. of authorised number of snow cutting equipment and urged that urgent action should be taken to procure the latest equipment available world wide to address the challenges of constructing roads and infrastructure on difficult terrains. However, in the action taken reply, the Ministry has stated that the Government has approved 17 numbers of snow cutters in Annual Procurement Plan (APP) 2010-11 and against that 5 nos. are being procured, thereby leaving a gap of 12 snow cutters as per the APP. Even if the 17 approved snow cutters are procured, the gap between the authorised and the quantity held would be of the number of sixty. Therefore, the Committee desire that additional allocation should be made in this year's budget so that roads of strategic importance may be completed to facilitate the Army to remain in the state of operational readiness.

F. Availability of land for construction of border roads

Recommendation (Paragraph No.13)

20. The Committee had recommended as under:

> "The Committee notes that availability of land is the prerequisite for construction of border roads. The delay in land acquisition is one of the factors responsible for delay in completing the BRO projects as admitted by Ministry of Defence. Various reasons for delay in acquisition of land that have been stated are lengthy legal procedures, non-availability of land records, frequent changes in the cost of land etc. It has also been stated that the maximum time is taken for the proposal to reach the nodal officer level and most of the time is wasted in getting staff together for joint survey. While noting that lengthy legal procedures and no-availability of land records are the real hurdles in acquisition of land, the Committee feel that some of the impediments being faced in the land acquisition can be addressed with the proper coordinating mechanism between the State Governments, district administration and local authorities. Better coordination would definitely address the problem of the time wasted in getting staff together in joint survey. The Ministry has stated that there is a need to sensitize state governments in this regard. The Committee feel that not only State Governments, but the district authorities, local bodies and the public also need to be sensitized that the land is required for the construction of border roads which is required for the security of the

country. The Committee also notes that public is an important stakeholder on the matter of construction of roads. Besides serving the strategic purpose, border roads also result in economic and social upliftment of the masses residing in those areas. As such frequent interaction by the Army with the masses would certainly help the authorities in getting the land for construction of border roads. The committee would like to emphasize that all the desired actions on the suggested lines should be taken and committee informed accordingly."

21. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"The matter of Land Acquisition (LA) & Forest Clearance (FC) were deliberated at various levels in detail and with the directions of Cabinet Secretariat, MOEF has set up Three Level Single Window system (at district, State HQ and Ministry) for FC cases of BRO and others. As first initiative, MOEF has also simplified the form. In the system of Single Window, there will be a facilitating team, comprising of specialists to help preparing FC/WL clearance proposal with the Nodal Officer in consultation with the State level coordinator of BRO/ITBP. The Single Window team at the level of MOEF will visit the different States to sensitize the teams at state levels and see the progress in operationalisation of other single windows."

22. In order to remove the impediments on the path of land acquisition for construction of border roads, the Committee had desired the Ministry to have coordinating mechanism among State Government, District administration and local authorities to address the problem of time wasted in getting staff together for the joint survey. The Committee had further desired to sensitize the local people about the overall development, the construction of border roads would lead to. The Ministry in its action taken reply has only stated about the three level single window system at District, State and Ministry level, which has already made available to the Committee during the course of examination of the subject. The Ministry has not replied about the steps taken to sensitize the local people about the impact of border roads on their economic and social upliftment. The Committee therefore, wish the Ministry to take concrete action in this regard and apprise them accordingly.

G. Streamlining the procedure with regard to forest and wildlife clearances

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 14)

23. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee notes that border roads do not need environment clearance under the Environment Protection Act. However, forest and wildlife clearances are required under the Forest Conservation Rule and wildlife Protection Act respectively As per the Forest conservation Rules, 2003, the timelines for clearance of proposals at state Government and Central Government level have been prescribed. These are 90 days for processing at the State Government level and 60 days at the Central government level for border roads along the Indo-China border and projects of national security importance. In spite of the clear cut time frame provided under the rules, the forest and wildlife clearances have been the biggest stumbling block for construction of roads and other infrastructure development in border areas as observed by the committee during the Study visit. The Committee have been informed that the average time taken is 2-3 years and in certain cases, 8-9 years have been taken for such clearances. The detailed data furnished by the Ministry with regard to forest clearance further substantiates the aforesaid observation of the Committee. Out of 109 Indo China Border roads (ICBR) cases, in respect of 11 cases forest clearances are not required. As such out of 98 remaining cases final approval accorded and approval in principle accorded is for 79 cases. As such approval of 19 cases is still pending at various stages. Similarly, in cases of non-ICBR cases, 138 cases still require forest clearances.

The Committee notes that the aforesaid issue is being considered by the Ministries of Defence and Environment and Forests and various steps have been taken to streamline the forest and wildlife clearances which include simplifying and design integrated form for application for forest and wildlife clearance, single window system at three levels viz. Ministry of Environment and Forests level, State Forest Department Head Quarters and at DFO level in districts, processing of applications involving forests clearance and wildlife simultaneously. The Committee notes that all these initiatives are steps in the right direction. However the real issue is enforcement of various decisions taken by the issue is enforcement of various decisions taken by the Government. In this connection, various suggestions were made in the meeting held by the Cabinet, the details of which were given by the Defence Secretary during the course of oral evidence. A proposal was made to have a nodal officer at the State level in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of environment and forests. It was also suggested that a checklist should be given to the nodal officers clearly delineating the responsibility of giving timelines. The Committee find that the aforesaid proposal merit consideration and the earlier decisions in this regard should be taken and the Committee informed. The Committee would also like the Ministry to follow the impact of the recent decisions

taken by the Government on the forest and wildlife clearances and keep the Committee informed. The Committee also desires that to strictly maintain the compressed timelines for forest clearance besides taking all the proposed initiatives, it is utmost necessary that the accountability at each level is fixed, only then the stipulated time frame for the purpose of forest clearance would be maintained. Concrete initiatives on the suggested lines should be taken and the Committee Apprised about the follow up actions in this regard."

24. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Three level single window system has been operationalised. Timelines have also been fixed by MoEF for different tasks at different stages. Nodal officers of MoD and MoEF are functioning. Additional Secretary (A) of MoD reviews forest clearance cases every quarter where representatives of MoEF and State Govts. participate. This has yielded positive results."

25. With regard to streamlining the procedure for forest and wildlife clearances, the Committee note that three level single window system has been operationalised. Timeliness have also been fixed by MoEF. Additional Secretary of MoD review forest clearance cases every quarter. However, the Ministry has not replied in regard to preparing a checklist for nodal officers clearly delineating the responsibility of giving timeliness and to ensure accountability at each level to adhere to the fixed time limit. Therefore the committee wish the Ministry to furnish the action taken in this regard.

H. Single umbrella for wildlife and forest clearance

Recommendation (Paragraph No.15)

26. The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee notes that on the issue of forest clearance, certain timelines have been prescribed under the forest rules which are further compressed for construction of roads and infrastructure for border roads along the Indo-China border and those of national security importance. However, in case of wildlife clearance, no timelines have been prescribed. There is an empowered committee constituted by the Supreme Court which also addresses some questions on wildlife. By the Army, an application has been filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court that for roads falling within 50 Kms. of the border, wildlife clearance should be dispensed with and the application is under consideration of the Court at the moment. The Committee strongly recommends that the issue should be followed with the Court. If the Supreme Court agrees to the aforesaid request of Army, it would certainly help in expediting wildlife clearances. The Committee further notes that although certain initiatives are being taken by the Government to streamline wildlife clearances which include processing wildlife forest clearance simultaneously and preparing integrated form for both the clearances, the Secretary Environment and Forests on record stated that this is an endeavor; however, both the processes are different. The committee, strongly recommends that there is an urgent need to process forest and wildlife clearance simultaneously so as to cut short the time taken individually for each of the processes. In this connection, appointment of the common nodal officers for both forest and wildlife clearance as proposed by the Cabinet Secretary merits consideration. The final decision in this regard should be taken expeditiously and the Committee informed accordingly."

27. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"The MOEF has implemented parallel cases for WLC & FC clearance simultaneously. The formats have also been circulated to the States for implementation in letter and spirit."

28. In the 8th report the Committee had recommended for a single umbrella for wildlife and forest clearance(WLC). Further the Committee had also recommended that the issue of dispension of wildlife clearance for the roads falling within 50 kms. of the border, should be pursued with the empowered Committee of Supreme Court. The Committee note that the MoEF has implemented parallel cases for WLC clearance simultaneously. However, the Ministry has not replied to the other part of the recommendation to pursue the matter with the Supreme Court. Therefore, the Committee desire the Ministry to apprise them on the above issue.

I. Rehabilitation & Resettlement

Recommendation (Paragraph No.17)

29. The Committee had recommended as under:

> **"**The Committee observe that rehabilitation in case of acquisition of land for construction of border roads is the responsibility of the concerned State/Union Territory. BRO pays amount of compensation as intimated by the revenue authorities for any such measures. BRO deposits the amount for rehabilitation as demanded by the State Governments. The Committee further observe that there are 432 number of cases pending in various courts because of various reasons such as lack of land records, joint family system and demand for higher compensation etc. The Committee feel that besides taking various initiatives to facilitate the land acquisition process it is utmost necessary that the person who has sacrificed his ancestral land, gets displaced and loses his livelihood is adequately compensated. The Committee desire that BRO should take all the initiatives in this regard. It should be monitored by BRO, that the amount paid by them to the State Government for compensation actually reaches the affected people on time by asking the State Governments to submit utilization certificates and holding regular meetings with the State Government officials and the affected parties. The Committee also desires BRO to go for out of court settlement and pay the market price for the land to optimize the satisfaction level of the affected people. The initiatives as suggested should be taken expeditiously and the Committee be kept informed."

30. The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

> "BRO pays the demanded amount of land acquisition to State authorities as per law. In practice out of Court settlement is rare. But nowadays the concerned authorities are taking into account the market rates for determining compensation."

31. In order to ensure timely payment of compensation to the people for sacrificing their land and livelihood for Defence, the Committee had desired that BRO should ask the State Government to submit utilisation certificate. However, the action taken reply is silent on this aspect. The Ministry has simply stated that BRO pays the demanded amount of land acquisition to State Authorities as per law. The Committee do not approve such type of casual attitude in regard to payment of compensation. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation to monitor the disbursement of amount to rehabilitate the population by insisting on submission of utilisation certificates by the State Governments.

CHAPTER II

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation (Paragraph No.1)

"The Committee notes that India has 14,880 Kms. long land borders running through 92 districts in 17 States and share with seven neighbouring Countries viz Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Bhutan and Nepal. Whereas the Western borders of the country along the State of J&K (plains), Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat are reasonably well connected and fairly accessible, the Northern and Eastern Borders are not as well connected as informed by the Ministry of Defence. In view of the aforesaid status of border roads, the Army posts along the Northern and Eastern borders are also not so well connected. Although a lot of efforts are being made by the Union Government and State governments to provide connectivity to our borders, the unique strategic location of India poses unique security challenges. More so, the problems specific to different portions of our extensive borders have become aggravated in recent times due to cross border terrorism as acknowledged by the Group of Ministers in its report. Besides the infrastructure being created on the border by our neighbouring countries particularly China further poses challenges before the country.

The government has created the Border Roads Organization (BRO) in the year 1960 with the aim of speedy development of road network and infrastructure along the borders and the roads constructed by the Ministry of defence are mainly handled by BRO. The Committee during the recent study visit to Leh, Srinagar and border areas have observed that construction and maintenance of border roads/tunnels/infrastructure are affected due to various factors which include lack of adequate funds, capability constraints, inadequate airlifting facility, pending forest/wildlife clearance, overall increase in the quantum of work being entrusted to Border Road Organization (BRO). The committee may like to emphasize that roads are an essential part of the border management. Besides the good connectivity to our border by roads is pre-requisite for the socio-economic development of the nation. Not only the, roads in the border areas are necessary for the Armed Forces to meet their strategic needs. In wartime, it is essential to develop and maintain roads to keep the line of communication open in original and redeployed sectors for the Armed Forces. Various aspects related to construction of border roads have been examined in detail by the Committee and observations/recommendations covering various issues have been given in the succeeding part of the report. Here, the committee may like to strongly recommend the Government to take all the desired initiatives to address to the various problems coming in the way of construction of border roads. Not only that, there is an urgent

need to have fast track procedures for the construction of roads and other infrastructure on our borders, keeping in view the strategic needs as well as the challenges the country faces."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Observations of the Committee have been noted."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 7 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No.2)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"The committee finds that whereas it is an acknowledged fact that the roads and other infrastructure is being created on the borders by different countries particularly China, the Ministry has not maintained any details and data with regard to such activities going on the borders which is evident from the response of the ministry. This speaks volume of the casual attitude of the Ministry towards such and important matter concerning the security of the nation. The committee feels that it is utmost necessary to keep a watch on the construction activities going on our borders by different countries and maintain the data in this regard. Besides there is an urgent need to ensure that our plans are in consonance with the impending security challenges. As such the committee strongly recommends to formulate some sort of mechanism in this regard. The committee should be kept informed about the action taken in this regard."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"In recent years, China has undertaken development projects of constructing roads in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The details of major roads constructed/upgraded by China in TAR are as under:

(a). **Major Highways**: All major highways have been upgraded to two way black top all weather and opened for traffic throughout the year. The details of highways in TAR are given below:

(i). **Western Highway.** This highway is also called Lhasa-Kashgar/Aksai Chin Highway. The distance from Kashgar to Lhasa is 3105 Km. It has a capacity of 3200 tons per day. This Highway has three

alignments from Shiquanhe to Lhasa. The details of the alignment are as under:

- **Northern Alignment:** This 1260 Km one-way road passes through Gerze and meets Central Highway at Amdo.

- **Southern Alignment"** It is a 1855 Km road from Shiquanhe to Lhasa.

- **Alternate Alignment:** An alternate alignment passes through Rudok-Shiquanhe-Gerze-Lhasa. Total distance is 1657 Km.

(ii). Central Highway: This 1154 Km highway is the main road link between Mainland China and TAR and links Gormo to Lhasa. Repair/upgradation of 535 Km section of this highway from Golmud to Lhasa, commenced in mid 2009.

(iii). Eastern Highway: This is a 1715 km highway between Chengdu (Sichuan) and Linzhi (Ngiti). It has a capacity of 3200 tones.

(b). **Road Infrastructure Along the borders:** China has constructed roads from all highways, logistic centres and major defence installations to all the passes and military on the LAC/IB. The details of the same are as under:

- **Western Sector.** The details are as under.

S/No.	Road	Classification	Surface
i.	Dropp Karpo-Dambuguru	-	Black top
ii.	Kongk La-Mobdo La	-	Ungravelled Motorable track
iii.	Chhaga La-Quinzang	CL-9	-
iv.	Charding La Nilung	-	Fair weather
v.	Dumchele Along Indus River-Umbu Mane	-	Motorable all weather track.
vi.	Rudok-Khurnak-Fort-Sirijap	-	Black top
vii.	Chorten-Charding La	-	Fair Weather road
viii.	Ane La-Dambuguru	CL-9	1-2 km short of Ane La and umetalled from Ane La to 1-3 km short from LAC

- **Central Sector.** The details are as under.

S/No.	Road	Classification	Surface
i.	Manza-Gumar	CL-9	Motorable
ii.	Sarkya-Tunjun La (Barahori)	CL-9	-
iii.	Mew Road Bifurcation from Poling-Kabrak-Sarang 2 km West of Vill Kabrak	CL-9	Gravelled
iii.	Shiquanhe-Gartok	-	Black top
iv.	Tholing-Menze (Missar)	CL-9	Metalled

- **Eastern Sector.** The details are as under.

S/No.	Road	Classification	Surface
i.	Kalashar-Phari Dzong-Yatung	CL-40	Black top
ii.	Khamba Dzong-Traksing Gompa	CL-18	Black top
iii.	Kalashar-Trakshing Gompa	CL-18	Black top
iv.	Mating-Yaksha-Yatung	CL-18	Black top
v.	Yatung to Nathu La	CL-18	Black top
vi.	Tsethang-Doshong La	CL-18	Black top
vii.	Khamba Dzong-Traksing Gompa via Serkang	CL-18	Black top
viii.	Khamba Dzong-Giru	CL-9	Natural
ix.	Giru-Sebu La	CL-9	Natural
x.	Sebu La-Kongra La	CL-9	Natural
xi.	Khamba Dzong-Lawu	CL-9	Natural

	Gompa		
xii.	Lawu Gompa-Kongra La	CL-9	Natural
xiii.	Giru-Road Junction	CL-9	Natural
xix.	Lawu Gompa-Towards Naku La Upto	CL-9	Natural
xv.	Traksing Gompa-Chomdo	CL-9	Natural
xvi.	Traksing Gompa-Chago La	CL-9	Natural
xvii.	Chago La Mating-Tuna Road Head	CL-9	Natural
xviii.	Yaksha-Phari Dzong-IB Bhutan Border	CL-9	Natural
xix.	Phari Dzong0IB Bhutan Border Tremo La	CL-9	Natural
xx.	Road Junction-IB Bhutan Border	CL-9	Natural
xxi.	Phari Dzong to Talung Dzong	CL-9	Natural
xxii.	Tangla/Supra to Lingsi La	CL-9	Natural
xxiii.	Road Junction North of Yatung to Tangkarla La	CL-9	Natural
xxiv.	Road Junction Chumbi to NE of Chakung Chhu	CL-9	Natural
xxv.	Rubinkha-Point 4476	CL-9	Natural
xxvi.	Chimintoka-Phim Karula	CL-9	-
xxvii.	Chang-Wuligang	CL-9	Natural surface upto Kangpaso, thereafter Black top
xxviii.	Nayu-Kungo-Tungu La	CL-9	-

xxix.	Lilung-Singo Samba	CL-9	Natural surface
xxx.	Nagiti-Lunang	CL-9	Black Top
xxxi.	Track Paka-Lamdo La	CL-9	-
xxxii.	Thongama-Goyu	CL-9	Natural surface
xxxiii.	Slambi-Lung	CL-9	Natural surface
xxxiv.	Migyitun-Bisa Bridge	CL-9	Natural surface
xxxv.	Chosam-Yume	CL-9	Natural surface
xxxvi.	Medi-Tatu	CL-9	All weather
xxxvii.	Rima-Madan Bridge	CL-9	-

(c). **Myanmar Border Roads- Construction of Stillwell Road.**

The 1739 km Stillwell Road starts from Assam and links Kunming in Yunnan province of South China through the Pangsau pass on the India-Myanmar Border. China has shown considerable interest in development of this Road. Present status of Stillwell Road is as under:

- **Kunming-Myitkyina (647 km)** China has already constructed/upgraded the stretch from Kunming to Myitkyina via Kambaiti pass into a all weather road in May 07.

- **Myitkyina-Tanai (192 Km).** Ya Za NA construction company, a Myanmarese company with pro-Chinese leanings, is constructing the road from Myitkyina to Tanai. Work is being carried out on a fast track to convert it into a four-lane road.

- **Tanai-Pangsau (174 km).** Reportedly the contracts for the Tanai-Pangsau Stretch, has also been awarded to a pro-China Myanmarese company.

2. The following roads are planned to be constructed/widened in near future in Pakistan:

(a). **Road Jaglot-Skardu.** The road is being converted to highway.

(b). **Road Sazin-Thakot**- The road is being converted to highway.

(c). **Road KKH – Dushanbe** – Inputs suggest that a feasibility study for a road that would link Dushanbe to the KKH through the Kuliab Pass is being carried out.

(d). **Four-Laneing of the KKH-** The widening of the highway entails making of a closed tunnel (length 480m) and 18 open tunnels (total length 197m)

(e). **Realignment of KKH-** The Diamer-Basha Dam is proposed to be constructed on the Indus River (35 Kms east of Chilas) with more than 100 Kms long reservoir. The reservoir of the Dam would submerge a 100km stretch of the KKH from Sazin to Raikot.

Government plans in view of the impending security challenges with reference to development and construction of the roads by China along the order are as under :-

Integrated Headquarters of MoD (Army) is seized of infrastructure development by China on its borders with India. India's own operational plans are in consonance with existing ground realities and impending security challenges."

Recommendation (Paragraph No. Para No. 3)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"The government has chalked out Long Term Perspective Plans viz LTPP1 and LTPP-II for augmentation of infrastructure on India borders. Under LTPP1, 277 roads of the length of 13100 Kms amounting to Rs 24886 crore are to be constructed by 2012. Similarly, under LTPP2, 281 roads of 14857 kms of the cost of Rs. 25268 Crore are to be constructed by the year 2022. The data with regard to progress of the works under LTPP1, as furnished by the Ministry indicated that out of total of 277 number of roads, only 29 roads could be completed and the work in respect of another 168 roads is in progress. No work has yet started in respect of 80 roads measuring 2624 Kms.

The Committee finds that even when the Secretary, Ministry of defence during the course of oral evidence has admitted that they may not be able to meet the deadline of 2012 in respect of LTPP1, there seems to be a sense of complacency on the part of BRO. When the issue of tardy progress of road works was raised during evidence, instead of informing the committee about the concrete action being taken by BRO, the representative of BRO stated the the time taken by them is one of the least taken by any other agency like PWD.

The Committee would like to emphasize that BRO is the prestigious organization of the country, which need to set international standards. The Committee therefore, strongly recommends that all the initiatives should be taken to address the various problems being faced with regard to construction of roads and it should be ensured the roads under LTPP1 and LTPP2 are constructed within the stipulated time frame."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"There are 116 roads of total length 3765 km identified under GS LTPP-I. 6 roads of length 98 Km have been completed and work is under progress on 52 roads of length 2125 Km. BRO will complete total 45 roads of length 911 km by 2012. BRO has planned to complete total 103 roads of length 2878 Km by 2015 and balance beyond 2015. The total cost of LTPP-I on present base year is Rs 9200 Cr.

There are 188 roads of length 8538 km with a cost on present base year of Rs 15255 Cr in LTPP-II. Presently work on 11 roads of length 876 Km is under progress.

The delayed PDsC of these roads are mainly attributed to delay in obtaining forest clearance, restricted fund flow upto Financial Year (FY) 2008-09, restricted/limited available working season, inadequate air effort available, reluctance/resistance shown by concerned state PWDs in handing over of roads and shortage of staff. However Govt has taken various steps to obviate these problems and MOEF has activated Single Window Clearance to clear the proposal of BRO on priority. In addition Govt has also approved incentives to contractors in remote/high altitude areas, outsourcing of air efforts and more recruitments.

Maximum efforts are put on the 73 Indo China Border Roads (ICBR) wherein 61 Nos of units have been moved to J&K, 7 Nos in Himachal, 33 Nos in Uttarakhand, 46 Nos in Arunachal Pradesh and 21 Nos in Sikkim. In last 2 years the deficiency of the manpower has been brought down from 25% to 12% it will be further reduced in near future.

BRO is committed to complete the works at the earliest with international standards."

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 4)

The Committee had recommended as under:

> "The Committee notes that all the road construction works of Ministry of Defence on the borders are executed by BRO. Besides, Ministry of Defence, BRO also works for five other Union Ministries. Not only the work assigned by Planning Commission State /UT Governments, National Highway Authority of India, public Sector undertakings, autonomous bodies are also handled by BRO. It has come out during the deliberations that this has led to a situation where the planned quantum of GS works is beyond the capability of BRO. From the detailed information furnished by the Ministry, the Committee understands that the works being assigned to BRO by various Ministries/agencies other than ministry of Defence are basically intended to develop the induction routes to the Borders as also to keep them traffic worthy at all times for the movement of the Army. While appreciating the fact the aforesaid works are complementary to the requirement of the Armed Forces, the Committee feels that efforts should be made to assign the normal works to the various Central and State Government agencies like PWD, so that BRO is primarily involved in the strategic infrastructure activity as per their mandate. The Committee feels that this would address the problem of over work of BRO and the various strategic works would be completed in time. The Committee would like to recommend that the necessary guidelines in this regard should be issued to various Ministries/State governments and other public sector agencies and the committee informed accordingly."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

> "We agree with the recommendations of the Committee that BRO should concentrate on strategic infrastructure. Other works should be taken up only when it becomes absolutely necessary for operational reasons and manpower management."

Recommendation (Paragraph No.6)

The Committee had recommended as under:

> "The Committee notes that for regular maintenance of border roads, BRO gets yearly maintenance grant and has special specifications not only for high altitudes but also for places where there are slides and areas where the roads could get damaged due to snow. However, the Committee during the month of June, 2010

have observed that road condition at high altitude areas was so bad that it took seven hours to reach from Leh to Pengong Lake.

During the course of deliberations, the Committee has been informed by the representative of the Ministry of Defence that over a period of time because of lack of funding, they always made less specification to cover greater length of roads. The Committee strongly feel that besides constructing wide network of roads along with the borders, it is imperative to maintain the existing one. Reducing the specifications of roads due to lack of fund is not a healthy sign.

The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that funds should not be a constraint for maintenance of roads. Adequate outlay as such should be provided for the maintenance of border roads. The Committee would like to be apprised of the data with regard to the expenditure involved in the maintenance of border roads during each year of Tenth Plan and Eleventh plan so as to understand the requirement of outlay in this regard."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Adequate funds have been made available to BRO for various construction works for both development & maintenance. The scale of maintenance has been doubled for better quality of works. (Anx-1).

Maintenance of Border Roads:-The year wise Allotment Vs Expenditure incurred by BRO is given as under:-

S/No	Financial Year	Allotment		Expenditure	
		Total Amount allocated to BRO (in Rs Cr)	Amount allocated to Maint of Roads (in Rs Cr)	Total Amount utilized by BRO (in Rs Cr)	Amount utilized for Maint of Roads by BRO (in Rs Cr)
	10th PLAN				
1	2002-2003	784.22	212.68	806.64	216.75
2	2003-2004	807.56	210.59	830.48	215.08
3	2004-2005	943.00	251.36	936.41	251.58
4	2005-2006	922.26	261.16	890.87	255.59
5	2006-2007	981.00	256.26	952.55	250.35

	11th PLAN				
1	2007-2008	1100.00	294.39	1099.13	292.82
2	2008-2009	1500.00	395.76	1535.15	392.99
3	2009-2010	2200.00	387.01	2141.03	263.34
4	2010-2011	3000.00	402.13	534.02 (up to Jul'10)	76.92 (up to Jul'10)

Recommendation (Paragraph No.-9)

The Committee had recommended as under:

> "BRO permitted outsourcing for all works in all projects from November, 23008. Besides, outsourcing consultancy and supply of materials, BRO is also outsourcing works related to design and construction of Bridges/Flyovers and construction of roads. From the data made available by Ministry of Defence, the Committee notes the execution contracts and supply contracts are increasing over the years. While taking note of the decision of the Ministry to outsource some of the execution and supply works of BRO, the Committee feels that it should actually result in increase in overall road and infrastructure construction activities of BRO. During the year 2008-09, the expenditure met was Rs 436.02 Crore, more than the pervious year whereas the execution contracts for Rs.653 Crore and supply contracts for Rs.269 Crore were sanctioned during the aforesaid year.
>
> Similarly, during the year 2009-10, there was an increase of Rs.605.88 Crore in the expenditure met by BRO whereas execution contract of Rs.830 Crore plus Rs.1458 Crore for Rohtang tunnel and supply contract for Rs. 352 Crore were sanctioned. If the amount involved in works outsourced is deducted from the overall expenditure the data indicates the decline in expenditure of BRO which is not a healthy sign. The Committee would like the Ministry to furnish the specific reasons in this regard. They would also like to emphasize that all actions should be taken to increase the capacity of BRO so that the border roads are constructed within the stipulated time frame of different plans."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

> "During the year 2008-09 (Rs 3304 Cr), the expenditure made was Rs 701 Crore, more than the pervious year (Rs 2603 Cr) whereas execution contracts for Rs.653 Crore and supply contracts for Rs.269 Crore were sanctioned during the aforesaid year.

Similarly, during the year 2009-10 (Rs 4205 Cr), there was an increase of Rs.901 Crore in the expenditure made by BRO whereas execution contract of Rs.830 Crore plus Rs.215 Crore paid as mobilization advance for Rohtang tunnel (total cost of contract is Rs 1458.06 Cr) and supply contract for Rs. 352 Crore were sanctioned.

Therefore the total expenditure incurred on outsourcing for FY 2008-09 is Rs 922 Cr. and Rs 1397 Cr for FY 2009-10. If we compare the increase of outsourcing in FY 2009-10 then it comes to increase of Rs 475 Cr over FY 2008-09. The increase in total expenditure of FY 2009-10 over FY 2008-09 is Rs 901 Cr thus increase in outsourcing is commensurate with the increase in expenditure. In addition during FY 2009-10 BRO had exceeded its capability in departmental works. Achievements of BRO for departmental works for FY 2009-10 for Formation is 1573 Km against capability of 1136 Km, for Surfacing 1943 Km against 2020 Km and for Permanent Works Rs 866 Cr against Rs 533 Cr."

Recommendation (Paragraph No.11)

"BRO staff work in harsh climatic conditions and as such it is utmost necessary that they are provided with proper uniform, shoes and other required livery items. From the information furnished by the Ministry, the Committee notes that there are huge gaps between annual requirements for replacement and available items. The Committee strongly recommends that the uniform, shoes and other livery items provided to BRO personnel should be of high quality and all efforts should be made to have the adequate number of each of the items so as to enable the officers/staff to work in such harsh conditions."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"BRO staff is authorized 77 types of uniform items including shoes and other livery items. Annual requirement for replacement are made available to Projects well in advance. Therefore there is not much gap between requirement and availability.

Most of the items for BRO personnel are being procured on DGS&D Rate contract and tender. The DGS&D has in house quality assurance to ensure quality, whereas DGQA has been engaged for ensuring quality of items procured through tenders.

Regular review with a view to introduce new item, scale and quality are being carried out. These are put up for Govt sanction if recommended. DGBR has been advised to be cautious and careful regarding quality of procurement."

Recommendation (Paragraph No.-12)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"During the study visit to Leh, Srinagar and some border areas, the committee had found that HQ DGBR has been consistently allotted air efforts lesser than its requirement as Indian Air Force does not have the requisite air lifts to meet the equipment of agencies including BRO. The data furnished by the Ministry with regard to demand and availability of airlift facility further substantiates the aforesaid observation of the Committee. Against the total demand of 4054.01 MT projected by BRO for the year 2010-11, requisition for 1250.68 MT has been placed by various projects and only 142.45 MT air efforts has only materialized up to 11 July, 2010. From the aforesaid data, the Committee finds that inadequate airlift is one of the major areas hampering the task of construction of border roads. To address the aforesaid issue, various short term and long term measures are being taken/proposed to be taken by the Ministry. 80 medium lift helicopters have been ordered which would be coming but the process would take time as acknowledged by the Secretary, Ministry of Defence during the course of oral evidence. Various options like outsourcing and involvement of private sector are being explored. As an interim measure BRO is negotiating with Pawan Hans for helicopters. However, these helicopters would be able to lift equipment of certain kind only. The equipment which is really very heavy requires a hook for which Air force would be catering. Thus Pawan Hans would complement the air lift facility provided by Air Force and there would be some addition to the capacity. While taking note of the fact that various proposals of the ministry to increase the airlift capacity are in the pipeline, the Committee would like to emphasize that early decision on all the projects should be taken so the airlift capacity is enhanced without any further delay. Besides the Committee would also like to emphasize that there is an urgent need to do the long-term planning in this regard. The demand of airlift in the coming years should be properly assessed and the requisite measures taken to fill the gap between the required and the existing airlift capacity through various proposed initiatives like outsourcing, involvement of private sector etc. the concrete initiatives should be taken without any further delay and the Committee informed accordingly."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Against the demand of 4054.01 MT Rotary Wing (RW), 929 MT RW air effort has been allotted by the Ministry of Defence. Further the following actions have been taken by BRO to outsource the RW air Effort for shifting of essential stores, Equipment and man power in Eastern and Northern Sectors:-

(a) **Outsourcing Through Contract Agreement With PHHL**:- Contract agreement between PHHL and BRO for outsourcing of RW air effort in the Eastern Sector has been concluded on 19 Aug 2010. Airlifting by PHHL has already commenced.

(b) **Outsourcing Through Empowered Committee**. Govt has constituted an empowered committee under the Chairmanship of DG (Ops) Air HQ to finalize outsourcing of air efforts in an integrated manner. Necessary steps are being taken to finalize it. It is expected that by mid -2011 the situation of air efforts would improve substantially.

Recommendation (Paragraph No.16)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee finds from the information made available to the Committee that various projects relating to the infrastructure at borders in the country are being implemented by various union Ministries/undertakings and State Governments. Ministry of Defence conducts regular review meetings with the representatives of State Governments. Besides, cabinet Secretariat/PMO also organizes coordination meetings with the officials of the Ministry of Defence, Border Roads Organization and State Governments. The Committee strongly feels that there is an urgent need to have some sort of structured coordinating mechanism represented by the various Ministries, State governments, Public Sector Undertakings involved in border roads and BRO so as to have a holistic view of the infrastructure being created on our borders. Such a mechanism would also help in resolving the various conflicting issues. The Committee urges that such mechanism should be set up expeditiously and the Committee informed accordingly."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"The development of the Border Areas is under the Border Management Department under the Home Ministry and they coordinate on this issue in consultation with BRDB and MOD. Moreover, an empowered committee on border infrastructure has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary. Ministry of Home Affairs is the coordinating Ministry. The recommendations of the Standing Committee is thus taken care of with regard to having a mechanism to review infrastructure being created on borders.

To conclude the Committee notes that the routine procedures rules and guidelines can never be the guiding principles when it is the question of security and safety of the nation. Since border roads are needed for the strategic reasons, it is of utmost importance to amend the laws, rules and guidelines to evolve the fast track procedures for land acquisition and also for getting forest wildlife clearances. Besides, there is an urgent need to address other issues viz. capacity constraints of construction agency I.e. BRO, inadequate airlift etc. The urgent actions as

suggested in the various recommendations/observations made in the report should be taken so as to provide very good connectivity to our borders."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Govt fully shares the concerns. Efforts are being made to streamline procedures for fast track construction of strategic roads. Coordination with different Ministries/State Governments is yielding results."

Index

S/No.	Para No.	Subject	Page
i.	Para No.1	Overall Scenario of construction of roads and border areas	1-2
ii.	Para No.2	Construction of roads on borders by the neighboring countries	3-8
iii.	Para No.3	Long Terms Perspective Plans of construction of border roads	9-10
iv.	Para No.4	Capacity building of BRO	11
v.	Para No.5	Expertise in tunnel construction by BRO	12
vi.	Para No.6	Maintenance of Border Roads	13-14
vii.	Para No.7	The budget as well as staff constraints	15-16
viii.	Para No.8	Induction of Information Technology in Border Areas	17
ix.	Para No.9	Outsourcing of activities of BRO	18-19
x.	Para No.10	Strengthening of infrastructure available with BRO	20-21
xi.	Para No.11	Providing proper uniform and other livery items to BRO officers and workers	22
xii.	Para No.12	Inadequate Airlift	23-24

xiii.	Para No.13	Availability of land for construction of border roads	25-26
xiv	Para No.14	Streamlining the procedure with regard to forest and wildlife clearances	27-28
xv.	Para No.15		29
xvi.	Para No.16		30
xvii.	Para No.17	Rehabilitation & Resettlement	31
xviii.	Para No.18		32

Recommendation (Paragraph No.18)

The Committee had recommended as under:

> "To conclude the Committee notes that the routine procedures rules and guidelines can never be the guiding principles when it is the question of security and safety of the nation. Since border roads are needed for the strategic reasons, it is of utmost importance to amend the laws, rules and guidelines to evolve the fast track procedures for land acquisition and also for getting forest wildlife clearances. Besides, there is an urgent need to address other issues viz. capacity constraints of construction agency I.e. BRO, inadequate airlift etc. The urgent actions as suggested in the various recommendations/observations made in the report should be taken so as to provide very good connectivity to our borders."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

> "Govt fully shares the concerns. Efforts are being made to streamline procedures for fast track construction of strategic roads. Coordination with different Ministries/State Governments is yielding results."

CHAPTER -III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS, WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

NIL

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE AND WHICH REQUIRE REITERATION

Recommendation (Paragraph No.5)

"The Committee finds that tunnel construction is part of the road works. BRO is the premier organization involved with the creation of infrastructure on our borders, even then it has no expertise in tunnel construction. The Committee during the course of examination have been informed that reputed consultants are being inducted to execute the work for execution of Rohtang tunnel. The Committee is unhappy to note the aforesaid position. It is surprising to note that even after celebrating the Golden Jubilee of BRO in the year, 2010, adequate emphasis has not been given on tunnel training. To address the problem, only 6-7 officers are now being trained in the task of tunnel construction. The Committee strongly recommends that all out efforts should be made to train more and more officers in the construction of tunnels. While involving the international reputed consultants for tunnel works, it should be ensured that our own officers are also associated with the task so that they may also get proper on-the-job training. The Committee would also like to emphasize that it should be ensured that all the tunnel works including Rohtang pass are completed within the stipulated time frame."

Reply of the Government

"Government is seriously concerned about training of BRO engineers for tunnel works. Further a Steering Committee (of MOD) is closely and regularly monitoring the progress of Rohtang Tunnel and all efforts are being made to complete it in stipulated time."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 10 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 7)

"The Committee observes from the information furnished by the Ministry that funds are not a constraint so far as the issue of construction of border roads is concerned. The outlay during Eleventh plan is steadily increasing and the expenditure position is also satisfactory except for the year 2009-10 when Rs.779 Crore had to be surrendered due to late approval of budget, the year being the election year. While taking note of the fact the finances are not a constraint so far as the matter of construction of border roads is concerned, the Committee find that a lot needs to be done to increase the capacity of BRO that is the main organization involved in the

construction of roads. From the data made available by Ministry of Defence, the committee finds that the restructuring BRO was sanctioned in September, 2006. Out of 151 sanctioned units BRO has raised only 127 units as part of capability building measures. The Committee further observe that there is a huge gap between the sanctioned and the existing strength of officers and subordinates in BRO. Out of the authorized strength of 1999 officers, the present strength is only 1204, the deficiency being 36.9 percent. Similarly in case of subordinates the existing strength is 35579 against the authorized strength of 40747, the deficiency being 12.7 percent. With the raising of the remaining 24 units, the situation in this regard may further worsen. The Committee express serious concern over such a state of affairs and strongly recommend that all initiatives should be taken to raise the remaining 24 sanctioned units and to recruit the officers and staff without any further delay so as to enable BRO to meet the overall increase in the quantum of work."

Reply of the Government

"Regarding steps taken so far, to fill up deficiencies of Officers and Subordinates:-

(a) **Officers**: Process for recruitment of 83 posts of AEE(Civ), 22 posts of AEE (E&M) and 31 posts of AO on interview basis has been completed by UPSC. Verification of documents, medical test etc are being done and offer of appointment will be issued shortly on completion of these requirements.

(b) **Subordinates**: 8610 candidates have since been inducted against various Advertisements since Sep 2007. Recruitment process in respect of 2565 vacancies published vide Advertisement No 01/2010 in Employment News dated 5-11 Jun 2010 is in process. The details of manpower up to Dec 10 are tabulated as follows:-

Group	Auth			Held			Deficiency		
	GP*	AP@	Total	GP	AP	Total	GP	AP	Total
A	980	556	1536	516	329	845	464	227	691
B	363	0	363	340	0	340	23	0	23
C	37748	2999	40747	32754	2734	35488	4994	265	5259
Total	**39091**	**3555**	**42646**	**33610**	**3063**	**36673**	**5481**	**492**	**5973**

*GREF Personnel

@Army Personnel

Regarding raising of balance 24 units, it is submitted that presently steps are being taken to augment the existing units for better efficiency and once existing units get augmented additional units will be raised."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 13 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No.8)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"As per the information furnished by the ministry of Defence, BRO Wide Area Network (BRO-WAN) is planning for connecting all BRO units for the purpose of sharing of data, voice and video. The Committee finds that it is utmost necessary to provide communication links in border areas. Not only that, proper communication is urgently required in war like situation. As such the Committee would like to emphasize that all efforts should be made so that the aforesaid project is executed expeditiously.

Reply of the Government

"BRO-WAN was sanctioned by Govt of India, Sectt BRDB vide letter No.02/426/BEA/2006 dated 18 Aug 2006 for a total amount of Rs.15 Crore. The scope of work includes setting up of MPLS (Multi Protocol Label Switching) based WAN consisting of core, distribution and access network which includes application software like office automation, e-mail etc. at various BRO locations including Delhi and Pune.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) was published for BRO-WAN in National Newspapers, Indian Trade Journal and BRO Website on 17 Sep 2009. Necessary steps are being taken for awarding the contract."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 16 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No.10)

"The data furnished by Ministry of Defence with regard to the authorized and existing infrastructure available with BRO indicates that there are gaps between quantity authorized and quantity held. Whereas, the Ministry of Defence has claimed that latest snow cutting equipments are available with BRO, the data indicates that out of 154 number of authorized snow cutting equipments, the

quantity held is 77 i.e. around 50 per cent. Similarly, for welding sets, there is shortage of 16 items and under dragline; there is shortage of 4 numbers. Border roads are constructed on difficult terrains and under the harsh climatic conditions and adequate number of snow equipments and other machines/infrastructure are urgently required to enable BRO to accomplish the give tasks. The gap between the quantities held in respect of the important items is a matter of serious concern. The Committee strongly recommends that the equipments should be purchased as per the authorized quantity without any further delay. Besides urgent action should be taken to procure the latest equipments available worldwide to address to the challenges of constructing roads and infrastructure on difficult terrains."

Reply of the Government

"The Govt has approved 17 numbers of Snow Cutters in Annual Procurement Plan (APP) 2010-11, out of which 05 Nos are being procured, and for balance 24 Nos size-II Dozers in lieu of Snow Cutters are being procured as presently BRO is improving many roads to NHDL specification where a large fleet of Dozers are required and proposed procurement will serve dual purpose. Once the NHDL work will get completed the requirement of Snow Cutter will be reassessed and procured accordingly.

Regarding welding sets the Govt has approved 20 Nos Welding Sets in APP 2010-11 and procurement action is under progress.

In addition, Govt has sanctioned Rs 100 Cr for creating a bank of cutting edge equipment over & above the authorization to meet the unforeseen requirements and fair wear & tear."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 19 of Chapter-I of the Report)

<u>Recommendation (Paragraph No.13)</u>

The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee notes that availability of land is the prerequisite for construction of border roads. The delay in land acquisition is one of the factors responsible for delay in completing the BRO projects as admitted by Ministry of Defence. Various reasons for delay in acquisition of land that have been stated are lengthy legal procedures, non-availability of land records, frequent changes in the cost of land etc. It has also been stated that the maximum time is taken for the proposal to reach the nodal officer level and most of the time is wasted in getting staff together for joint survey. While noting that lengthy legal procedures and no-availability of land records are the real hurdles in acquisition of land, the Committee feel that some of the impediments being faced in the land acquisition can be

addressed with the proper coordinating mechanism between the State Governments, district administration and local authorities. Better coordination would definitely address the problem of the time wasted in getting staff together in joint survey. The Ministry has stated that there is a need to sensitize state governments in this regard. The Committee feel that not only State Governments, but the district authorities, local bodies and the public also need to be sensitized that the land is required for the construction of border roads which is required for the security of the country. The Committee also notes that public is an important stakeholder on the matter of construction of roads. Besides serving the strategic purpose, border roads also result in economic and social upliftment of the masses residing in those areas. As such frequent interaction by the Army with the masses would certainly help the authorities in getting the land for construction of border roads. The committee would like to emphasize that all the desired actions on the suggested lines should be taken and committee informed accordingly."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"The matter of Land Acquisition (LA) & Forest Clearance (FC) were deliberated at various levels in detail and with the directions of Cabinet Secretariat, MOEF has set up Three Level Single Window system (at district, State HQ and Ministry) for FC cases of BRO and others. As first initiative, MOEF has also simplified the form. In the system of Single Window, there will be a facilitating team, comprising of specialists to help preparing FC/WL clearance proposal with the Nodal Officer in consultation with the State level coordinator of BRO/ITBP. The Single Window team at the level of MOEF will visit the different States to sensitize the teams at state levels and see the progress in operationalisation of other single windows."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 22 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No. 14)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee notes that border roads do not need environment clearance under the Environment Protection Act. However, forest and wildlife clearances are required under the Forest Conservation Rule and wildlife Protection Act respectively As per the Forest conservation Rules, 2003, the timelines for clearance of proposals at state Government and Central Government level have been prescribed. These are 90 days for processing at the State Government level and

60 days at the Central government level for border roads along the Indo-China border and projects of national security importance. In spite of the clear cut time frame provided under the rules, the forest and wildlife clearances have been the biggest stumbling block for construction of roads and other infrastructure development in border areas as observed by the committee during the Study visit. The Committee have been informed that the average time taken is 2-3 years and in certain cases, 8-9 years have been taken for such clearances. The detailed data furnished by the Ministry with regard to forest clearance further substantiates the aforesaid observation of the Committee. Out of 109 Indo China Border roads (ICBR) cases, in respect of 11 cases forest clearances are not required. As such out of 98 remaining cases final approval accorded and approval in principle accorded is for 79 cases. As such approval of 19 cases is still pending at various stages. Similarly, in cases of non-ICBR cases, 138 cases still require forest clearances.

The Committee notes that the aforesaid issue is being considered by the Ministries of Defence and Environment and Forests and various steps have been taken to streamline the forest and wildlife clearances which include simplifying and design integrated form for application for forest and wildlife clearance, single window system at three levels viz. Ministry of Environment and Forests level, State Forest Department Head Quarters and at DFO level in districts, processing of applications involving forests clearance and wildlife simultaneously. The Committee notes that all these initiatives are steps in the right direction. However the real issue is enforcement of various decisions taken by the issue is enforcement of various decisions taken by the Government. In this connection, various suggestions were made in the meeting held by the Cabinet, the details of which were given by the Defence Secretary during the course of oral evidence. A proposal was made to have a nodal officer at the State level in the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of environment and forests. It was also suggested that a checklist should be given to the nodal officers clearly delineating the responsibility of giving timelines. The Committee find that the aforesaid proposal merit consideration and the earlier decisions in this regard should be taken and the Committee informed. The Committee would also like the Ministry to follow the impact of the recent decisions taken by the Government on the forest and wildlife clearances and keep the Committee informed. The Committee also desires that to strictly maintain the compressed timelines for forest clearance besides taking all the proposed initiatives, it is utmost necessary that the accountability at each level is fixed, only then the stipulated tine frame for the purpose of forest clearance would be maintained. Concrete initiatives on the suggested lines should be taken and the Committee Apprised about the follow up actions in this regard."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"Three level single window system has been operationalised. Timelines have also been fixed by MoEF for different tasks at different stages. Nodal officers of MoD and MoEF are functioning. Additional Secretary (A) of MoD reviews forest clearance cases every quarter where representatives of MoEF and State Govts. participate. This has yielded positive results."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 25 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No.15)

The Committee had recommended as under:

"The Committee notes that on the issue of forest clearance, certain timelines have been prescribed under the forest rules which are further compressed for construction of roads and infrastructure for border roads along the Indo-China border and those of national security importance. However, in case of wildlife clearance, no timelines have been prescribed. There is an empowered committee constituted by the Supreme Court which also addresses some questions on wildlife. By the Army, an application has been filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court that for roads falling within 50 Kms. of the border, wildlife clearance should be dispensed with and the application is under consideration of the Court at the moment. The Committee strongly recommends that the issue should be followed with the Court. If the Supreme Court agrees to the aforesaid request of Army, it would certainly help in expediting wildlife clearances. The Committee further notes that although certain initiatives are being taken by the Government to streamline wildlife clearances which include processing wildlife forest clearance simultaneously and preparing integrated form for both the clearances, the Secretary Environment and Forests on record stated that this is an endeavor; however, both the processes are different. The committee, strongly recommends that there is an urgent need to process forest and wildlife clearance simultaneously so as to cut short the time taken individually for each of the processes. In this connection, appointment of the common nodal officers for both forest and wildlife clearance as proposed by the Cabinet Secretary merits consideration. The final decision in this regard should be taken expeditiously and the Committee informed accordingly."

The Ministry in its action taken reply, has stated as under:-

"The MOEF has implemented parallel cases for WLC & FC clearance simultaneously. The formats have also been circulated to the States for implementation in letter and spirit."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 28 of Chapter-I of the Report)

Recommendation (Paragraph No.17)

"The Committee observes that rehabilitation in case of acquisition of land for construction of border roads is the responsibility of the concerned State/Union Territory. BRO pays amount of compensation as intimated by the revenue authorities for any such measures. BRO deposits the amount for rehabilitation as demanded by the State Governments. The Committee further observes that there are 432 number of cases pending in various courts because of various reasons such as lack of land records, joint family system and demand for higher compensation etc. The committee feels that besides taking various initiatives to facilitate the land acquisition process it is utmost necessary that the person who has sacrificed his ancestral land, gets displaced and loses his livelihood is adequately compensated. The Committee desires that BRO should take all the initiatives in this regard. It this regard, it should be monitored by BRO, that the amount paid by them to the State Government for compensation actually reaches the affected people on time by asking the State Governments to submit utilization certificates and holding regular meetings with the State Government officials and the affected parties. The Committee also desires BRO to go for out of court settlement and pay the market price for the land to optimize the satisfaction level of the affected people. The initiatives as suggested should be taken expeditiously and the Committee be kept informed."

Reply of the Government

"BRO pays the demanded amount of land acquisition to State authorities as per law. In practice out of Court settlement is rare. But nowadays the concerned authorities are taking into account the market rates for determining compensation."

Comments of the Committee
(Please see para no. 31 of Chapter-I of the Report)

CHAPTER -V

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED

NIL

NEW DELHI;
16 March, 2011
25 Phalguna (Saka)1932

SATPAL MAHARAJ,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on Defence

MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE (2010-11)

The Committee sat on Monday, the 16th March, 2011 from 1500 to 1530 hrs. in Committee Room `62', Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Satpal Maharaj - Chairman

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Harish Chaudhary
3. Shri Kamal Kishor 'Commando'
4. Shri Kapil Muni Karwariya
5. Prof. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
6. Shri J. Ramesh
7. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
8. Shri Baju Ban Riyan
9. Rajkumari Ratna Singh

RAJYA SABHA

10. Shri Avinash Rai Khanna
11 Shri Mukut Mithi
12. Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi
13. Shri M.V. Mysura Reddy

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri T.K. Mukherjee - Joint Secretary
2. Shrimati Sudesh Luthra - Director
3. Shrimati Jyochnamayi Sinha - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairman welcomed the members to the sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee then took up for consideration and adoption of the draft report on action taken by the Government on the recommendations/observations contained in the Eighth (Fifteenth Lok Sabha) on Construction of Roads in border areas of the country and adopted the same with slight modification. The Committee, then, authorised the Chairman to present the same to the House on a date convenient to him.

The Committee then adjourned.

_____

APPENDIX

ANALYSIS OF THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN THE EIGHTH REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE

		Total	Percentage of Total
1.	Total number of recommendations	18	
2.	Recommendations/Observations which have been accepted by Government Para Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12, 16 and 18	10	56
3.	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of Government's replies Para Nos. Nil	-	-
4.	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted by the Committee Para Nos. 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, 15, and 17	08	44
5.	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited Para Nos. Nil	-	-